**CASE STUDY**

**WORLD TOURING EXHIBITIONS: IS “COMMERCIAL” A BAD WORD?**

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The feeling we at World Touring Exhibitions have when discussing exhibitions in orthodox environments, is that “commercial” is a bad word. No, it is not.

The point is: how do we define “commercial”? We think it is a concept made of several components:

1. Engaging with a variegated audience;
2. Entertaining elements;
3. Thinking international;
4. Interactivity;
5. Flexibility.

**Engaging With A Variegated Audience**

Caring about both traditional audiences and prospective new ones is important. This is of course useful to sell more tickets; but is also necessary if one wants to keep the exhibitions world in good health. Awakening cultural interest in new visitors often leads them to pursue that interest further: they are likely to visit other exhibitions or museums. If we were not creating an event palatable to that audience, we would have lost them.

**Interactive Science (Volcano)**

Our production Interactive Science allows visitors to learn while playing with science through 40 fully interactive machines as well as educational and entertaining videos. We sold 100,000 tickets in 6-months run in Rome Italy, 30% sold to schools. The feedback we received was interesting: visitors felt the content was so entertaining and scientifically interesting, lots of them decided to visit a science museum they never visited before.

**Entertaining Elements**

Entertainment to us means adding visible, clearly perceivable elements of fun and interaction to the creation. We want people to enjoy their visit, feel enriched, we want them to share their experience with others.

The concept of culture and entertainment going hand in hand can work well. When this is done with honesty, it makes non-regular museums goers feel in a familiar environment instead of overwhelmed by a serious atmosphere that could put them off from returning.

Our recent production 3D Doubt Your Eyes provides the visitors with the opportunity to experience fairly unusual situations through taking pictures within the 50 different 3D scenes: eaten by a dinosaur, sinking with the Titanic, fighting in Star Wars, painting Leonardo’s Mona Lisa... While entertaining themselves within the interactive experiences, they appreciate artistic 3D paintings.
(all scenes are hand-painted by 3D artists) as well as learn the concept of optical illusion. 3D Doubt Your Eyes, during its 1-month inaugural run in Haifa Israel, sold 28,000 tickets.

3D Doubt Your Eyes (Ninja)

Our exhibitions informational displays and descriptions are created to be easily changeable into any language without the client incurring major costs. This has the added benefit of simplifying everybody’s life as well as showing our respect to the client’s own language, culture and budget.

The content should be international, too. The world is a pretty big place; cultural and sales opportunities are almost endless in that direction. This is not just because international contents are more easily welcome in any country, hence enhancing an exhibition’s chance of success: it is also because we strongly believe in our responsibility as cultural operators to make a vigorous stand on what culture and society are (or should be...) in the 21st Century: international entities where cross-pollinating is an everyday well-established and welcome reality.

3D Doubt Your Eyes (Mona Lisa)

Thinking International

Thinking international is a concept we at World Touring Exhibitions truly hold dear. We are ourselves international: British, Italians and Chinese work together in our UK office. Our two most trusted shippers are based in Heathrow and Rotterdam. At work there are sometime six different languages being spoken or written in the same day!

Living Dinosaurs

Pretty much all of our exhibitions are international in content or interest: Living Dinosaurs, Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel (officially licensed by the Vatican), Private Marilyn (original items owned by the legendary Marilyn Monroe), Experience Da Vinci, Space The Final Frontier...
Interactivity

We live in a time of short attention span and computer-style interactivity. People want to be hands-on, interact, move, touch: we must keep their attention alive.

All our exhibitions have strong interactive elements: either using Da Vinci’s models, animatronic dinosaurs, walking on the moon through Space the Final Frontier’s virtual reality machine, or enjoying Interactive Science and 3D Doubt Your Eyes which are 100% interactive experiences, the audience is part of it.

One example: our Travelling Bricks (made of LEGO® bricks) exhibition offers the pleasure of viewing 120 spectacular LEGO models created by LEGO Certified Professional Artists as well as learning about different means of transportation and their history. But it also offers a large play area (about 250,000 bricks in two pools and a 5mt long graffiti wall) where LEGO enthusiasts of any age can develop their creativity. Our audience do value as much the models and educational experience they provide, as they do the creative interactive part.

Flexibility

Exhibitions, apart from being displayed in museums, can also be displayed in shopping malls, special events, exhibition halls, cultural centres. This creates more opportunities to let a wider audience get close to the exhibition experience. However such an array of venues can present different challenges each time our designer creates a layout. If an exhibition were not to have a certain built-in flexibility, we would lose many venues hence new audience. We believe that any exhibition wanting to tour internationally should be capable of offering a certain degree of customisation.

It is important being able to suit small as well as large venues. But of course flexibility has its limits: one should never distort the theme or lower the level of an exhibition to suit a venue at all costs (if it definitely doesn’t work in a certain space, so be it).

Epilogue

World Touring Exhibitions is an international touring exhibitions company. We produce exhibitions and hire them out worldwide. We have very good sales records as well as provide quality. We work with the very people in the know about their subject: Interactive Science with a team of scientists, Travelling Bricks with LEGO Artists, Living Dinosaurs with natural history foundations, Space The Final Frontier with NASA engineers, and so on.

Producing and touring exhibitions is a challenge. Whether they are commercial, strictly cultural, weird ones or anything in between, challenges are present: different languages, cultures, perceptions, currencies, logistics... it never ends. So why should we not give the very best shot at carefully planning ways to reach the widest possible audience?

Keeping a high standard while creating a popular event which also appeals to non-traditional visitors does, after all, benefit the whole exhibition and cultural world.

This is what “commercial” means to us.